

2003 Report of Accomplishments

San Juan County Conservation District



Natural Resource Improvements in 2003 - Summary

- Completed 15 farm/forest plans for local landowners incorporating best management practices that will reduce erosion, reduce contaminated runoff, improve soil quality, improve wildlife habitat, enhance groundwater recharge, and reduce fire risk.
- Continued and expanded “early warning” surface water quality monitoring program, examining 5 to 7 parameters in three watersheds on two islands (6 to 8 watersheds on the three main islands by January 2005).
- Conducted San Juan County’s first Watershed Stewards training program with twelve stewards completing the training and ultimately generating nearly 2,000 hours of volunteer participation in a variety of watershed projects.
- Conducted a restoration feasibility study for the Port Stanley lagoon and salt marsh on Lopez Island
- Initiated a Garry Oak habitat restoration project on 50 acres of Cady Mountain, San Juan Island.
- Implemented extensive public information and education program reaching 440 individuals through workshops, 700 households through newsletters, 9,000 households through monthly articles in local newspaper, and 500 households through public displays.



Mission of the San Juan County Conservation District

To work with landowners and residents to develop sustainable land use practices that protect and conserve San Juan County’s soil and water for wildlife habitat, forestry, farming, residential, and other uses.

Water Quality Implementation

- Engaged 15 landowners in on-the-ground conservation planning and BMP implementation, established the district’s first local cost share program, assisting five of those cooperators.
 - 8,200 feet of fencing installed
 - 107.5 acres placed into prescribed grazing
 - 56.5 acres protected by use exclusion
 - 12 acres placed under upland wildlife habitat management
 - Resource management plan implemented on 46.5 acres
 - 2 manure composting facilities constructed
 - 10,980 square feet of firebreak established
 - 7 acres of forest stand improvement
 - 18.5 acres under nutrient management
 - One pond constructed for irrigation and surface water management
 - Other BMPs put in place: roof runoff management, heavy use area protection, brush management.
 - Provided general technical assistance to over 175 additional landowners.
-

Basic Funding combined with Local Funding

- Maintained essential district operations—including board support, annual elections, financial management, required reporting and record keeping, basic operational infrastructure.
 - Developed and implemented the district’s first election by mail procedures and increased participation by nearly 400%.
 - Leveraged additional district funding for conservation and stewardship projects totaling more than \$230,000.
 - Supported district engagement in Natural Resources Conservation Service Local Work Group in an effort to secure additional NRCS financial and technical assistance for San Juan County landowners.
-

Puget Sound/Water Quality

- *Continued implementation of district-developed watershed plans for Swifts Bay, False Bay, and Westsound watersheds:*
 - *Surface water quality monitoring in progress or scheduled for all three watersheds;*
 - *Port Stanley Lagoon restoration feasibility study in progress;*
 - *Established watershed action group (Watershed Enhancement Team, W.E.T.) on Lopez Island.*
- *Developed conservation and stewardship folio as tool for educating San Juan County residents (especially new residents) regarding critical conservation values and practices*

Professional Engineering

- *Completed engineering consultation and analyses in support of restoration feasibility study for Port Stanley lagoon and salt marsh.*
- *Provided engineering and design support required to secure funding for initial phase of Deer Harbor estuarine restoration project on Orcas Island.*

Watershed Conservation/Habitat Restoration

- *Initiated 50 acre Garry Oak habitat restoration project—involving nine individual landowners—funded under the NRCS Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program.*
- *Continued to serve as Salmon Recovery Funding Board Lead Entity for WRIA 2, generating local funding for projects studying and conducting inventories of nearshore habitat and a project to restore an estuarine habitat ecosystem.*

Small Farm Programs

- *All district farm assistance is directed to small farms (see Water Quality Implementation accomplishments).*
- *Addressed the growing natural resource risks from increasing numbers of small, noncommercial livestock operations (especially horses) by providing specialized workshops for this population and consultations for those considering acquisition of livestock.*
- *Acquired a manure spreader for loan to small farmers applying nutrient management to their operations.*

Community Collaboration & Coordination

- *In collaboration with others, presented San Juan County's first Low Impact Development conference attended by over 125 county residents.*
- *Collaborated with local school districts in conducting water quality monitoring on San Juan and Lopez Islands.*
- *Developed and presented workshops on ponds, composting, and forest health with San Juan Cooperative Extension.*

Information & Education

- *Established Watershed Stewards program to establish a population of citizen watershed advocates throughout San Juan County.*
- *Implemented an extensive public information and education program which included:*
 - *11 public workshops or conferences attended by 440 persons;*
 - *monthly natural resources question and answer column;*
 - *extensive district website;*
 - *semi-annual newsletter;*
 - *conservation/stewardship folio.*

Washington Conservation Districts assisting land managers with their conservation choices

